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THE MACWHIRTER SKETCH BOOK

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WATER COLOURS.

With 23 Coloured Plates.

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THE

MACWHIRTER SKETCH BOOK

BEING REPRODUCTIONS OF

A Selection of Sketches in Colour and Pencil from the Sketch Books of John MacWhirter, R.A., designed to assist the Student of Landscape Painting in Water-Colour

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WITH 24 EXAMPLES IN COLOUR, MANY PENCIL SKETCHES

AND AN

INTRODUCTION BY EDWIN BALE, R.I.

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED

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"Ellen's Isle" from the Painting 48

No. 1. SKETCH OF A SCOTCH FIR.

As may be imagined, it was not very comfortable standing-ground making this sketch, but it had to be put up with. The sketch is slight, but careful as far as it goes.

INTRODUCTION

IT is not proposed to go over again the points dwelt upon in Mr. MacWhirter's "Landscape Painting in Water Colours." That book is for beginners; this is a continuation and development of the former one and supplies further subjects for study. It should be taken in conjunction with the earlier volume, which gives particulars of the colours used by Mr. MacWhirter, and other matters in relation to each sketch. This information it has not been deemed necessary to repeat.

This collection of sketches, selected from Mr. MacWhirter's sketch-books, offers to the student fresh subjects for study, and illustrates the various aims an artist may have in making a sketch from Nature. There is, for example, the detail sketch for foreground use, as in the flowers of No. 3; the single object, such as the tree of No. 1 and the boat of No. 5; the sketch of a place like the "Nyon on the Lake of Geneva," No. 45, with its lovely view of the distant Alps, or the sketch of an effect such as is given in the last rays of evening light on Mont Blanc, as seen from the garden of the Hotel at Mornex, No. 19, a garden in which Mr. Ruskin spent many happy days. And there is the sketch, No. 29, made from no particular place, but which is merely a first suggestive blot of the composition of a subject. The pencil sketches scattered through the book are also bound to be very instructive as illustrating how notes may be made, either by careful drawing to record actual form—as in No. 2; by a mere "scrabble" of the slightest lines to show the relation of the trees in a group, No. 20, or of the strong effects of light and shade in another group, No. 32. They are notes only, and may be of practical service to the painter only, but they illustrate the way in which such notes should be made by every student of the things in Nature which strike him.

Sketches are a very personal matter. A subject which appeals strongly to one artist does not necessarily touch another, and the methods of sketching are quite as personal, one artist being able to "dash" in a blot with splendid results, while from another everything in the sense of "dash" is far removed, and only slow, careful records yield any possible or useful result.

In whatever manner the work is done, the dash or the deliberation must be directed to the end in view. A sketch must aim at something definite:

it must be some fact or effect of Nature that is recorded. More work is perhaps wasted by lack of the perception of this truth than by any other. If an effect is aimed at—sunshine, cloud, sunset—be sure what you are trying to get, and go for that regardless of other things, and if it is an effect of colour, do not be seduced by any fascinating detail to forget that it was the broad colour effect you started out to get. If you want the detail make another sketch.

When you set seriously to work out of doors it is desirable to make yourself as comfortable as you can. Get a seat that does not cramp your legs; a high seat is better than a low one. Have a proper support to your sketch, so that it is not blown into your lap or on to the ground by every gust of wind. It is a great saving of time, and will pay you in the end, to arrange matters of this kind before starting to work. There are natural discomforts enough which you cannot contend with, such as dust, which at times covers your sketch, and fills up your colour box, and if you are in the neighbourhood of motor cars, your eyes and mouth, and hides your subject from you. And there are flies. I have a sketch made by a riverside in Wales one evening, which I cannot look at without feeling the maddening bites of myriads of midges. These things must be put up with. But don't allow yourself to be deterred from making your sketch by any of these difficulties. If you are making notes only, you may not need either seat or easel, and you are happy if you can lean for a steadying support against a tree or a cottage wall. But in spite of all the drawbacks, there is no occupation more delightful, or more full of satisfaction, than sketching from Nature.

EDWIN BALE.

MR. MACWHIRTER'S PALETTE FOR WATER-COLOUR WORK.

Cobalt, French Blue, Antwerp Blue,
Vermilion, Rose Madder, Light Red, Brown Madder, Crimson Lake,
Cadmium, Lemon Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Raw Sienna, Indian Yellow,
Chinese White, Vandyke Brown, Black.

NOTES BY THE ARTIST.

The landscape painter should be a happy man,

"The world is all before him whence to choose."

No one can tell another what or how to choose. Each artist must trust to instinct. We ought all, of course, to admire and revere the great masters and try to catch their spirit, but not to imitate their manner. Look at Nature with your own eyes, and feel the beauty of something (flower or cloud) so strongly that you must try to show how beautiful it is. Try to record this in your own way and it will have some value.

Begin at the beginning—I mean study the parts before attempting the complete picture. Study flowers, and tree-stems, and stones, and clouds, etc. In my first book I said, "Always carry a notebook," and I repeat it. Be ready at any moment in town or country to note the form of a cumulus cloud, any fleeting effect, a branch of a tree, or anything that attracts your attention. By this means you will lay up a store of valuable information.

Every country has some fascinating characteristic for the landscape painter.

Scotland is the land of colour, sombre and gay. There is endless variety; the contrast of grey rocks, purple and brown heather, dark pine, birch, mountains of all shades, beautiful in sunlight, still more so, sometimes, under cloudy skies, and even in rain or storm.

Italy is the land of charm, but requires sunlight to bring out its beauty. Turner and our best landscape painters have made us familiar with its beauty.

The Roman Campagna, the coast scenery of Sicily, especially Taormina and Palermo, are unsurpassed for refined beauty. Some of my very earliest works were painted in the Tyrol and Salzkammergut, and I have often revisited these countries. The towns of Nüremberg and Bamberg are well worth visiting, and the country around is picturesque with old castles or with quaint villages perched on rocky summits.

Norway is seldom visited by English or Scottish artists. Yet it is in some respects the most impressive country of all; a land of waterfalls,

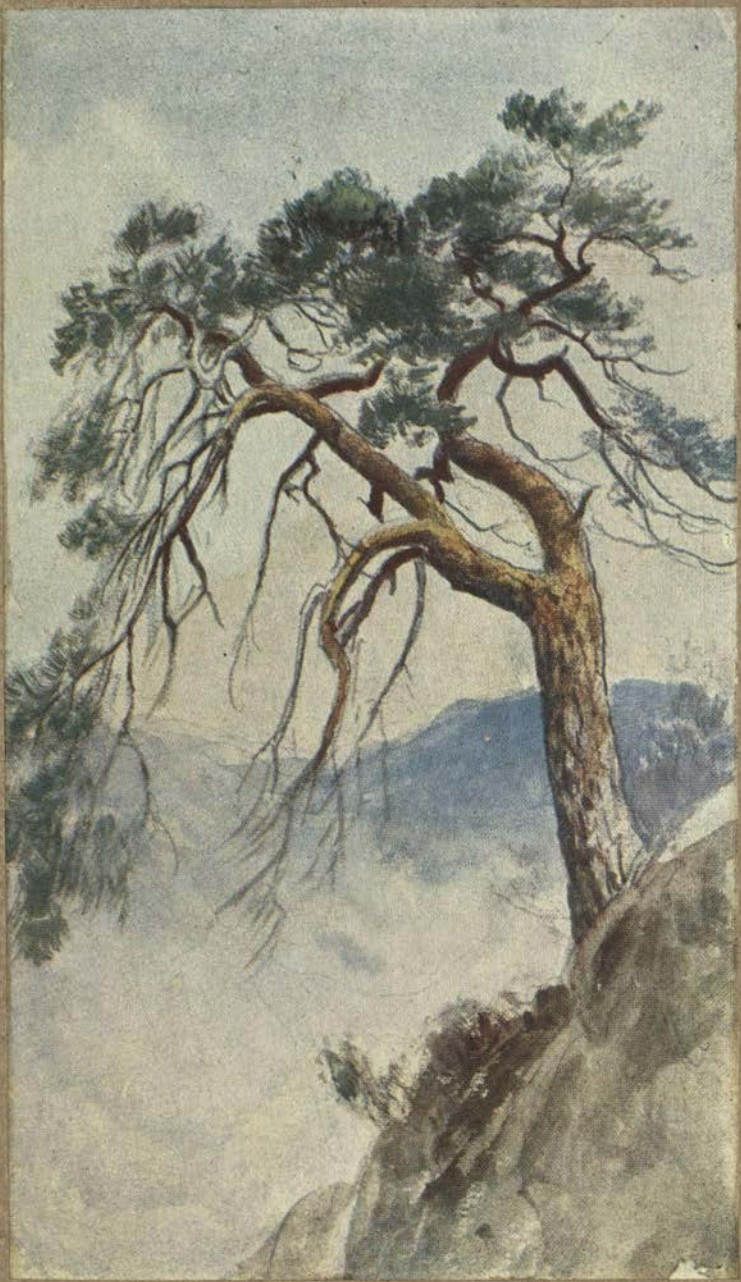
pine forests, picturesque saw mills and interesting customs and costumes. There is a feeling of grand solitude in the sometimes wide, sometimes steep and sombre fiords, reminding one occasionally of Scottish sea lochs, but grander and steeper, though not so varied in colour.

Nevertheless some artists seem to prefer to paint only their own country, or even their own county, and I can quite understand their point of view also—there is study for a lifetime in any one field or town.

Turner would still be our greatest landscape painter if he had only produced such pictures as "The Frosty Morning" and "Crossing the Brook," but he is in my opinion very much greater because he is also the painter of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," "Ulysses," and the "Bay of Baiæ." Some of his later works, as also those of Corot, are full of suggestive charm, but they are not the sort of work that a student should copy. If it is necessary to copy pictures at all, then I would advise the earlier works of these masters or of Millais, the greatest painter of our own time.

The publisher has made this selection from my note-book with my approval. The sketches are not given merely as specimens of my work, but because some of them show that even a rude, hasty sketch, well remembered, may at some future time become a valuable suggestion for a picture. The majority of them are reproduced the actual size of the originals.

J. MacW.



No. 2. A PENCIL DRAWING OF A GRACEFUL SCOTCH FIR, BLAIR ATHOL.

A sketch like this can be made in a very short while, and may be of use at any time.

No. 3. FOREGROUND SKETCH OF FLOWERS.

This rough sketch was made only for its colour, it is not a botanical study. It was done on a cold day on the summit of the Gemmi Pass, Switzerland.

No. 4. FROM MORNEX, LOOKING TOWARDS MONT BLANC.

This sketch, like many others, was made for no particular purpose, but one cannot make too many notes, and a pencil and note-book are easily carried. It was made almost from the same point as the colour sketch, No. 19.

No. 5. STUDY OF A BOAT, BAY OF NAPLES.

A very early work.

No. 6. THE WINDINGS OF THE FORTH FROM ABBEY CRAIG, STIRLING.

No. 7. OLD BRIDGE, AVIGNON.

This was never intended to be more than a sketch, a pleasant reminiscence of one of my annual visits to the Continent.

Malvr

No. 8. **IL SAGRA DI SAN MICHELE, NEAR TURIN.**

A picturesque subject — half fortress, half monastery — with glimpse of the Alps.

No. 9. MOUNT ETNA, FROM ABOVE TAORMINA. MORNING EFFECT.

Standing above the Greek Theatre. The early morning sun tinging the snow on the summit. A beautiful effect in Nature.

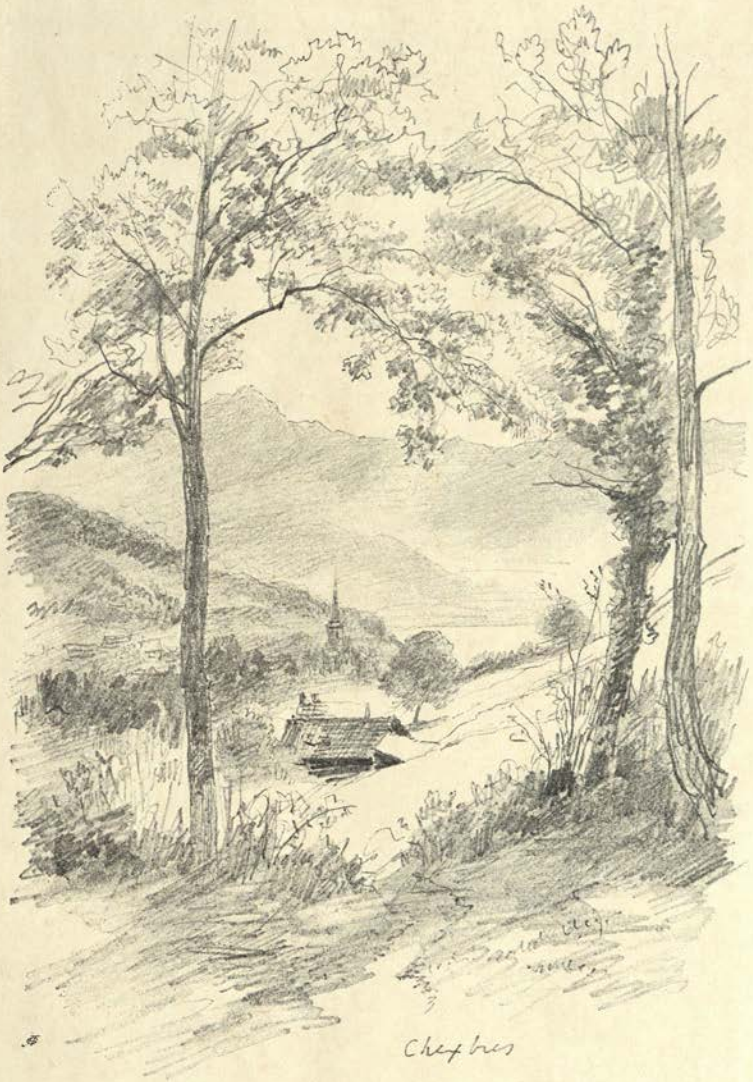
No. 10. IL SAGRA DI SAN MICHELE.

Another view of the same subject as that given in No. 8. One gets to know a subject by drawing it from various points of view.

No. 11. BIRCH TREES IN SHERWOOD FOREST, NEAR EDWINSTOWE. EVENING EFFECT, NOVEMBER.

Some of the finest old oak trees, so characteristic of Sherwood Forest, are near Edwinstowe, and close beside "The Major," the largest tree in the forest, there are some graceful birch trees.

MacW



No. 12. PENCIL SKETCH AT CHEXBRES, ABOVE VEVEY, LAKE OF GENEVA.

A very little bit of blue lake visible.

No. 13. CHAPEL ABOVE LUGANO, ONE OF THE ITALIAN LAKES.

A pretty white chapel, with good frescoes painted on the outside wall.

Mac W

No. 14. NOTE OF AN EVENING EFFECT, DRAWN WITH A VERY SOFT PENCIL.

Scotch Firs against a lemon-coloured sky.

No. 15. DISTANT VIEW OF MONT BLANC FROM ABOVE FINHAUTS.

Intended as a pencil sketch, but finally worked in a tint, partly to preserve the lines.

No. 16. SKETCH OF A BRANCH OF AN OAK TREE.

No. 17. MOONLIGHT, LAKE OF COMO, ITALY.

Outlined at night and washed in next morning.

Mac W-

No. 18. SKETCH NEAR SESTRI LEVANTI, ON THE RIVIERA.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

No. 19. VIEW OF MONT BLANC, EVENING. FROM MORNEX, ABOVE GENEVA.

A striking effect. I saw this on the night of my arrival here. I waited a week and never saw it again, or only faintly. Plate No. 4 is a pencil sketch from near the same spot.

MacW

No. 20. A SCRIBBLE OF AUTUMN BIRCH TREES IN THE CHISHOLM PASS, GLEN AFFRIC.

No. 21. A FARM HOUSE AND STONE PINE, NEAR ANTIBES, ON THE RIVIERA.

No. 22. BEHIND THE VILLAGE OF FIESCH, ON THE FURKA PASS.

If one carries a note-book, a sketch like this can be made while changing horses.

No. 23. MOONLIGHT, LOCH AILORT.

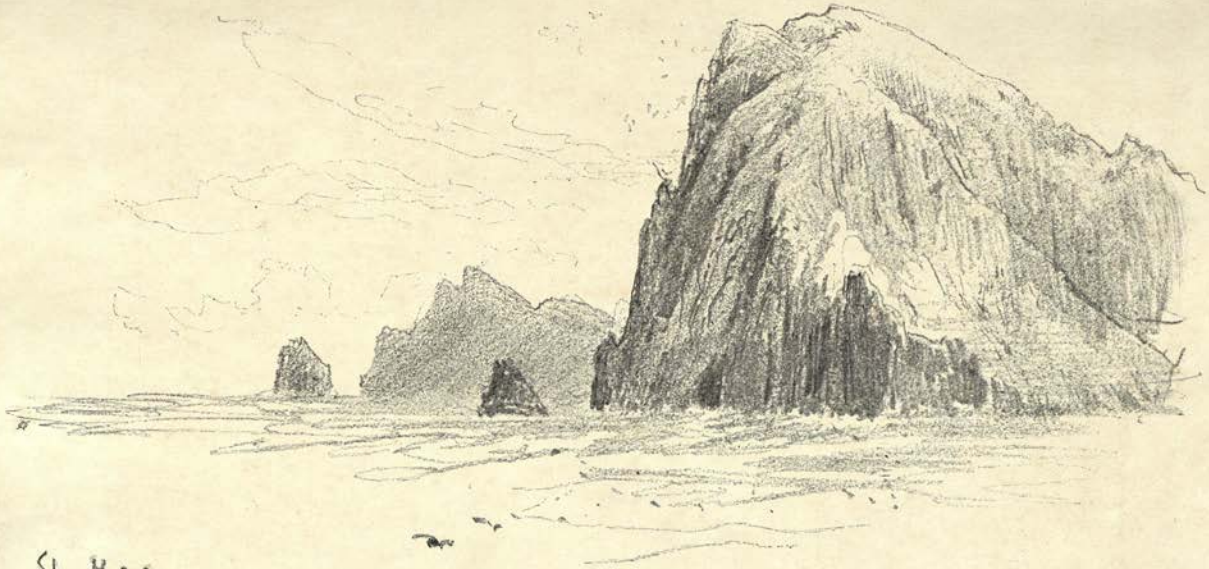
With the mountains of Moidart, where "Prince Charlie" hid for a time.

No. 24. NEWARK TOWER.

These were selected, to show rough experiment. I hesitated whether to paint the picture oblong or upright, and so made a sketch of both horizontal and upright treatment. Eventually I painted a small upright picture.

No. 25. AT CIMIEZ, ABOVE NICE.

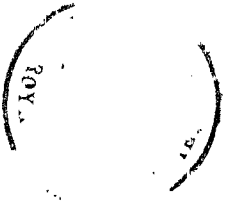
A rapid sketch on a hot day before a thunder-storm.

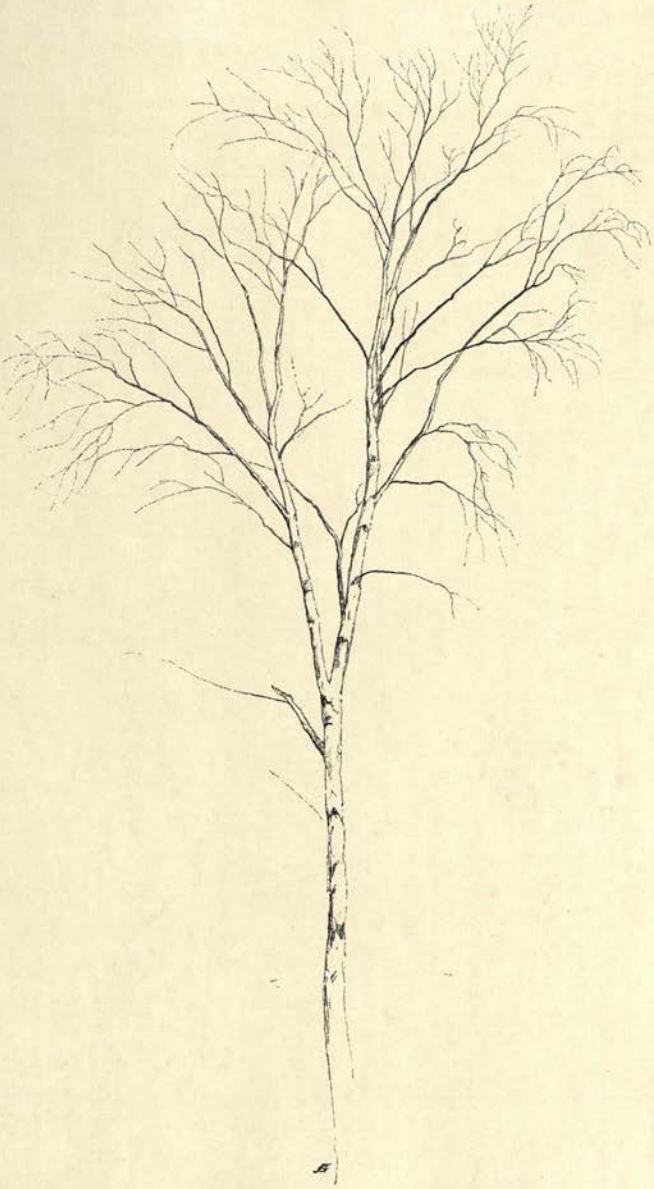


No. 26. THE CLIFFS, ST. KILDA, THE HEBRIDES.

St. Kilda is sixty miles from the nearest land, and consists of two great rocks which are divided. This one is Borera.

No. 27. MOONLIGHT, LENNO, LAKE COMO.





No. 28. ONE OF MANY OUTLINES OF BIRCH TREES IN WINTER.

No. 29. LOCH RANZA.

Blottesque sketch. This was selected because it was done as a design for a picture. It was suggested by Loch Ranza Bay.

MacW

No. 30. DUDDINGSTON CHURCH AND LOCH.

No. 31. SKETCH IN GLEN ETIVE.

Sailed in yacht to head of Loch and then had a long walk. The sketch was made about half-way between Loch Etive and King's House.

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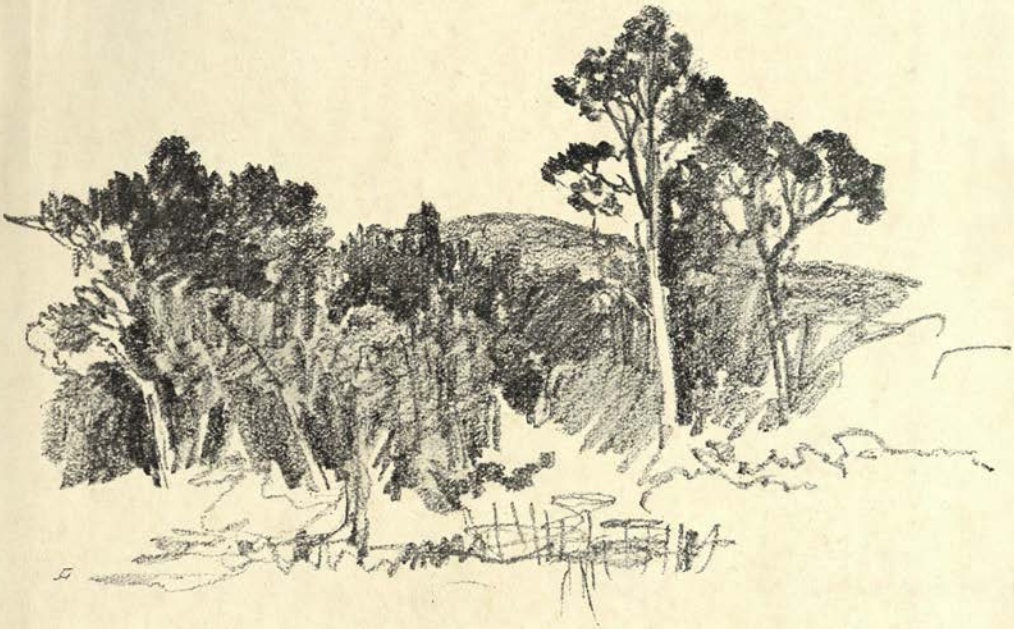
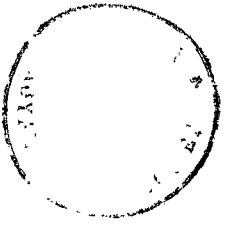
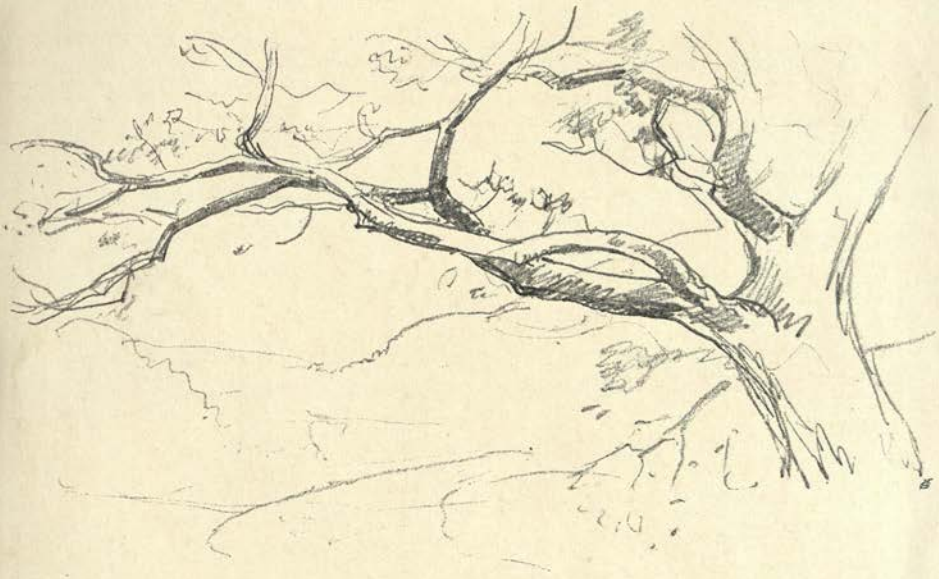


No. 32. A RAPID ROUGH SKETCH OF FIR TREES DRAWN WITH A VERY SOFT PENCIL.

No. 33. LOCH LOMOND.

Sketch on grey paper. Body colour freely used.





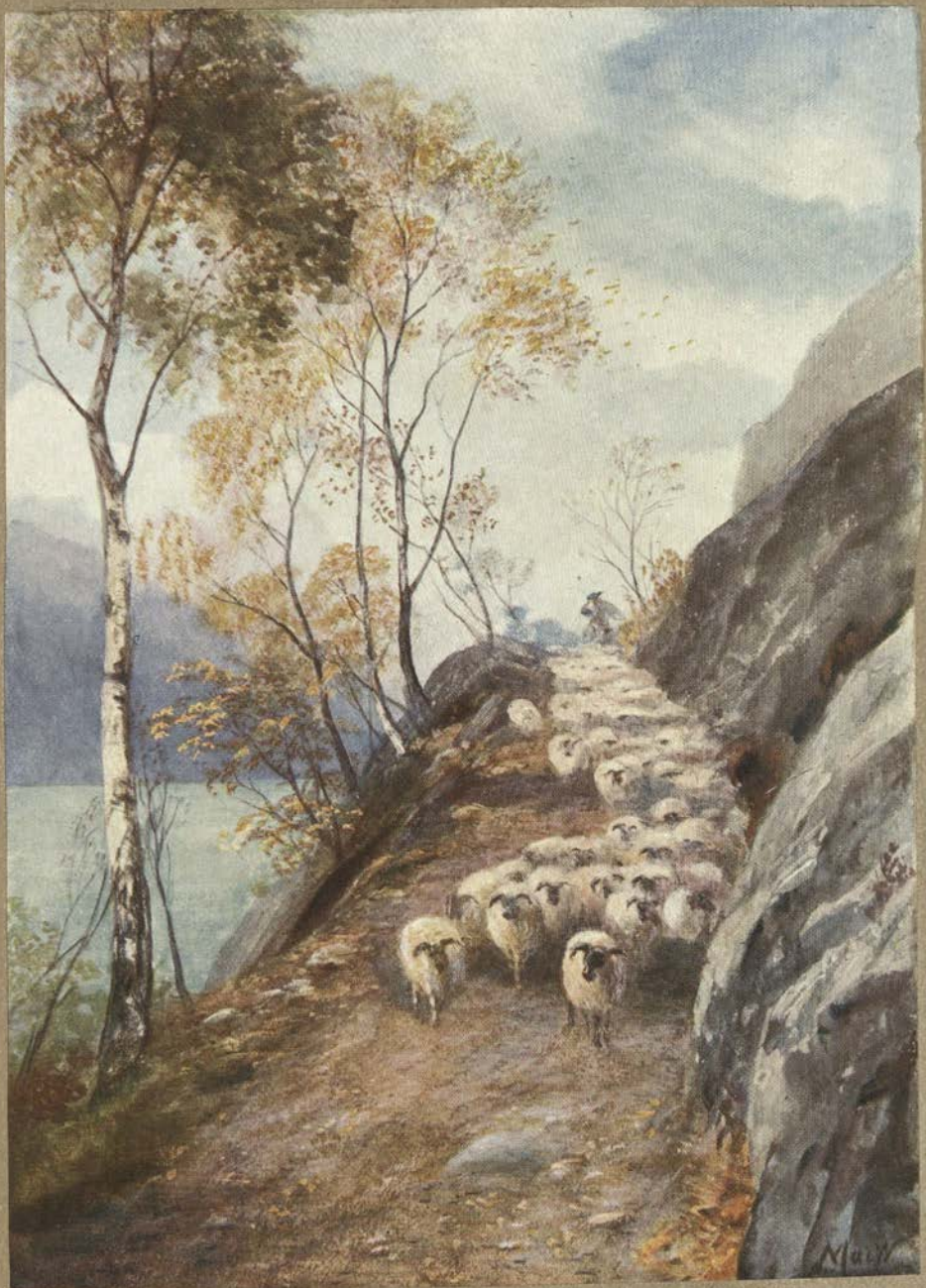
No. 34. AN OAK BRANCH.

No. 35. LOCH AN EILAN, MOONLIGHT.

No. 36. A RAPID NOTE WITH A VERY SOFT PENCIL.

No. 37. ROAD ROUND LOCH KATRINE.

A reminiscence painted many years since.



No. 38. CRAIG MILLAR CASTLE.

A pencil sketch from an Edinburgh note-book.

No. 39. THE HILLS OF SKYE FROM KYLE, LOCH ALSH.

No. 40. A RAPID NOTE OF A BIRCH TREE IN WINTER.

No. 41. THE GRAMPIAN HILLS, EVENING.

No. 42. AT SPITZ, ON THE LAKE OF THUN.

Spitz is perhaps the most beautiful place on the Lake. The mountain forms are fine, and in spring the apple and cherry blossoms contrast with the dark background.

No. 43. PICTURESQUE SHRINE ON THE HIGH GROUND ABOVE THE LAGO D'ORTA, ITALY.

MacVr—

No. 44. A SKETCH ON THE SPEY, NEAR KINCRAIG.

No. 45. **HAYMAKING ON THE ALPS.**

Above Nyon, Lake of Geneva. First sketch for a picture.

MacW

No. 46. TWO TRIAL SKETCHES FOR ARRANGEMENT OF A PICTURE OF ELLEN'S ISLE.

The picture as finally painted is seen in Plate 48.

No. 47. EVENING EFFECT, JUAN LES PINS, RIVIERA.

No. 48. ELLEN'S ISLE.

Reproduction from the picture as completed. The property of Sir Robert Ropner, Bart. (See sketches, No. 46.)

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